

## **Love Life Live Lent: youth group material**

Welcome, and thank you for taking a look at these five Bible studies to help you use the *Love Life Live Lent* booklet. They are written for Christian groups of young people aged 11–18.

There is enough material for over an hour's session each week, or you can use just one or two of the ideas if you have less time available. If you want to use this booklet with club-style groups then the 'play', 'fast forward', 'mission impossible' and 'rewind' features are most suitable. You don't have to use every idea each week. Pick the ones that would be most appropriate for your group, but don't be afraid to try something new with them too.

Some of the sessions will need more preparation than others. Each week begins with a list of things that will need to be prepared in advance, so you should not get caught out.

Encourage your young people to take an active role. There are ideas for them to take away and prepare for the following week. Contributing to a session will develop a sense of ownership, leading to greater participation and a sense of responsibility for the outcome of the activity. Getting young people involved is an excellent training step for future leadership.

Most of all, enjoy leading your group through Lent. Pray for them, and with them, that God will open their eyes to new ways of serving him and their neighbours this Easter time. After all, 'God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power at work within us.' Ephesians 3.20

Each session is linked to the one of the themes from the *Love Life Live Lent* booklet<sup>1</sup> and is in six sections, as follows:

1. **Play** A game or activity to begin the session.
2. **Pause** A quieter time of Bible study, worship, prayer and discussion.
3. **Reaction** Something to do that takes the ‘head knowledge’ of the Pause section and applies it in a practical way to situations in everyday life.
4. **Rewind** A look back at one of the previous week’s actions from the booklet to see how individuals fared with the challenge.
5. **Mission Impossible** An individual challenge for someone in the group to take on a specific action from the booklet, with the understanding that he or she will report back on the success of the mission.
6. **Trax** An opportunity for members of the group to contribute creatively to the session. Each week someone prepares a medley of songs with links to the week’s theme for the others to listen to in one of the unstructured moments of the session, such as the refreshments slot.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that we have not supplied material for the ‘Environment’ theme as there are now many other resources available in this area. See for example [www.ecocongregation.org](http://www.ecocongregation.org) and click on ‘Free resources’.

## Session 1: Love Life Live Lent theme: Home & Family

### Advance preparation

- Happy families game – sticky notes with famous family members written on them
- Prayer activity – cut out a person shape from paper, one for each young person in the group
- String thing – large ball of string
- Fast Forward – A4 card, colouring/writing materials
- Mission Impossible – a card with action 6 from the booklet written out on it, an envelope
- **NB.** ‘Family’ can be a sensitive issue for all kinds of reasons. You will need to consider if some of the activities in this session may raise difficult issues for some of the group and substitute alternatives if necessary. Why not spend a few moments committing your young people and their individual family situations to God?

### Play

#### Happy families

Write out a collection of names of members of famous families on small sticky notes – anything from the Simpsons family to one of the families from a popular soap opera such as *Coronation Street*. Stick one note to each young person’s forehead, without letting them see the name on it. They have to go and find the rest of their ‘family’ by asking questions about themselves, e.g. Am I a man? Do I have blue hair? To make it harder, those who answer can only say yes or no. How quickly can the families come together?

### Pause

#### Bible study and discussion

*Read the story of the Lost Son from Luke 15.11-32.*

When this story is told we are accustomed to focusing on the younger son, the one who left home, wasted his inheritance and returned, broken and expecting nothing, only to be

received with love and welcomed back into the family. However, there is another character here who is frequently overlooked, but he has a story worth telling too.

*Read verses 25 to 32 again.*

*Open a discussion about 'fairness' in families:*

Do different people in your family get different or preferential treatment?

Is there something going on at home that really isn't fair at the moment?

Prayer challenge – give each young person in the group a piece of paper shaped like a person. Ask them to think of a situation at home that doesn't seem fair or about which they feel resentful. Which family members are involved?

Ask them to commit to pray for one of those people each day in the coming week. The paper cut-out can be stuck up somewhere at home as a prompt. Ask them to see, as the week goes on, if they notice a change in that person or in their own attitude towards that person. What might God be asking them to do to help the family members be reconciled to each other?

String thing – get your group into a circle; give one person a ball of string. That person must think of one thing about his or her own family to say thank you to God for and say it out loud. Then, holding on to one end of the string, the person throws the ball to someone else across the circle from them. That person catches the ball of string and then says one thing about his or her family that he or she would like to thank God for. That person then holds on to the string and throws the ball to some one else. Go round the whole circle until everyone has had a go. You should now have a big web of string in the middle of the circle if everyone holds on to their string and pulls tight. Make the point that you are now all joined together by everyone's prayers. You represent your families, who are all loved by God. Finish off with a prayer, and then you could always see if you can trace the string all the way back to the beginning!

## **Reaction**

Random acts of kindness – ask your group to think of the people in their families. These people spend their time supporting, encouraging and watching over them, so this week is the week of ‘random acts of kindness’. Think of one member of your family you could do something kind for today – e.g. Mum – make her a cup of tea and get her to sit down with her feet up while you do the washing up. Sister – send her a text to say what a great sister she is and how much you appreciate her lending you her clothes. Try and do one act of kindness every day for a week and see how you feel by the end of the week – it’s so much better when we think about others rather than ourselves – life seems more exciting! When you start to do this more often, it will become a habit.

### **Rewind**

This activity will not be possible for the first session as there will have been no challenges undertaken so far. Instead take a moment to explain the *Love Life Live Lent* concept.

Like Advent, Lent is a time of getting ready, preparing your heart and mind for one of the big events in the Christian calendar – this time it’s Easter.

This year a booklet has been provided to help you as you go through Lent to think about the ways in which Jesus would have lived out his faith.

So get stuck into Lent this year – don’t just give up chocolate but take up being a better neighbour, someone who lives their faith out in the world just as Jesus did.

### **Mission Impossible**

Prepare a card with one of the actions from week 1 of the booklet printed out in full on it. Put this into a large envelope marked Mission Impossible and seal it. Gather the group together and issue a challenge, ‘Who thinks they can complete my Mission Impossible?’ Explain the rules: the person must complete the challenge on the card within the week and be prepared to report back on the successful mission at the next Youth Meeting.

Make a great drama of presenting the envelope and choosing one of the young people.  
Read the challenge aloud and wish them luck!

**Trax**

Ask someone known for their love of music to supply a soundtrack for next week's session, of songs with a link to the theme of 'Neighbourhood'.

## Session 2: Love Life Live Lent theme: Neighbourhood

### Advance preparation

- Cool wall – large sheet of paper on the wall divided into 4 sections, labelled ‘seriously uncool’, ‘uncool’, ‘cool’, ‘sub-zero’, magazine images of celebrities, clothes, gadgets etc. (For an example see: [www.topgear.com/jsp/coolwall](http://www.topgear.com/jsp/coolwall) )
- Prayer activity – photocopy the prayer so the young people each have a copy to take away
- Mission Impossible – a card with one of the actions from week 2 of the booklet written out on it, an envelope

### Play

#### Cool wall

Prepare a cool wall like the one on the television programme *Top Gear*. On *Top Gear* pictures of cars are placed in different sections on the wall according to whether they are considered to be cool or uncool – with things that are *really* cool going into the ‘sub-zero’ section and things that are *really* uncool going into the ‘seriously uncool’ section. This is a light-hearted, conversation-starter type activity that usually generates lots of involvement as people express their personal preferences and opinions. Start the ball rolling by holding up a picture from a magazine of a celebrity personality or the latest ‘must have’ computer game. Ask where the young people would place it on the wall, ‘cool or uncool?’ You can extend the game by asking the young people to come up with their own ideas for items for each section of the wall.

### Pause

#### Bible study and discussion

*Read the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10.30-37.*

When Jesus originally told this famous story it caused anger among the people who were listening. They were very upset about Jesus’ choice of hero. The ‘good guy’ was a Samaritan. These days his point is totally lost on us. In Jesus’ time the Samaritans were despised by the ordinary man in the street in Jerusalem, who considered they had got

their religion all wrong and were not a 'pure' race. Jesus' choice of a hero was redefining who was 'cool' in God's eyes. It was outrageous. What's more, this wasn't an isolated incident. He kept on pushing the boundaries of who was acceptable. He healed a Roman centurion's servant – the Romans were the oppressive occupying regime, and here was Jesus helping one of them. He had a tax collector as one of his best friends – and everyone knew the tax collectors were in the pay of the Romans. He went around preaching and teaching and then let a prostitute pour perfume on his feet and wipe them dry afterwards with her hair. His behaviour was scandalous!

*Open a discussion about friendships and the choices we make in them:*

Think about the people in your class at school or the people where you work.

Are some people 'in' – everyone wants to be their friend?

Are some people 'off limits' – there is an unwritten rule that says you can't be friends with them?

What might happen if you cross the invisible line and start to build a friendship with someone 'seriously uncool'?

Prayer challenge – give each young person in the group a copy of the prayer below. Ask them to think of a situation at home, school or work where someone is left out on the edges of friendship. Where the prayer says 'to any fellow creature', they could insert the name of that person.

Ask them to commit to pray the prayer each day in the coming week. What might God be asking them to do to befriend the person they have named?

Dear Lord,

I expect to pass through this world but once;  
and any good thing, therefore, that I can do  
or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature,

let me do it now;  
let me not defer or neglect it,  
for I shall not pass this way again.

Dear Lord,  
I expect to pass through this world but once;  
and any good thing, therefore, that I can do  
or any kindness that I can show to \_\_\_\_\_,  
let me do it now;  
let me not defer or neglect it,  
for I shall not pass this way again.

A prayer by Stephen Grellet (1773–1855) from *Favourite Prayers* chosen by people from all walks of life, compiled by Deborah Cassidi and published by Cassell, 1998.

### **Reaction**

Guardian angels

The young people may find this difficult, but persevere. For them to take this challenge means to swim against the tide of peer pressure and modern culture – and that’s asking a lot!

Ask everyone to think of the name of someone whom others would consider to be ‘uncool’. Each day this week they will attempt to do something kind for that person. It may be to say hello, to share some sweets or chocolate, to sit next to them, to ask them about their interests, etc. The young people can be as creative as their imaginations allow. Next week they can share what they did, what reaction they got from others and how they felt about it.

### **Rewind**

Ask if anyone would like to share any ‘random acts of kindness’ they did last week.

### **Mission Impossible**

Prepare the young person who took up week 1's 'Mission Impossible' to feedback to the rest of the group. An interview is often effective in helping people talk when they feel shy in front of the group or modest about their achievements. You might like to ask:

What was your challenge?

What did you do?

What was the reaction?

What was the best bit of the challenge?

Would you do it again?

Prepare a card with one of the actions from week 2 of the booklet printed out in full on it. Put this into a large envelope marked Mission Impossible and seal it. Gather the group together and remind them of the rules: the person must complete the challenge on the card within the week and be prepared to report back on the successful mission at the next Youth Meeting. Make a great drama of presenting the envelope and choosing one of the young people. Read the challenge aloud and wish them luck!

### **Trax**

Ask someone known for their love of music to supply a soundtrack, for next week's session, of songs with a link to the theme of 'Community'.

### Session 3: **Love Life Live Lent theme: Community**

#### Advance preparation

- Living in a box game – lots of cardboard boxes, newspaper, scissors, string and sticky tape
- Thank you – balloons, writing materials, small pieces of paper
- Prayer activity – a street map of your local area. Prepare a letter about the prayer activity and the balloon-letting-off activity with all the information the young people will need and include a tear-off slip for those who require parental permission to sign and return. Think about the kind of needy people to be found in your area and prepare an appropriate prayer for them.
- Fast Forward – chocolate, syrup, butter, cake cases, microwave oven/ stove top cooking ring, large mixing bowl, wooden spoon, tablespoon, teaspoons
- Mission Impossible – a card with action 21 from the booklet written out on it, an envelope

#### **Play**

##### Living in a box

Get your group into teams of three. Each team has ten minutes to make a shelter using the boxes and other props. They must be able to get one or two members of their team into the box shelter at the end of the time.

Once you've all had a look at the shelters, make the point that people around the world live in houses just like this. You will even see this on the streets of our capital cities.

Then see if they can get their whole team into the shelter. Say that there are places where whole families live in this kind of small space. In cities and towns in Britain there are asylum seekers and refugees living ten or more people in a one bedroom flat.

#### **Pause**

Bible study and discussion

*Ask one person to read Luke 14.7-15 and another person to read Luke 14.16-24.*

Jesus was a great party-goer and a great people-watcher. The actions, reactions and attitudes he discusses here with people in the first century are still relevant today. We still all want to be the centre of attention, in the thick of the action, just as they did. His story about the great feast reinforces his words in verse 12: ‘Don’t invite people who will invite you back. Invite the kind of people who will never be able to return the invitation and let God reward you for it later.’

*Open a discussion about the community where you live:*

What are the best and worst things about this city/town/village?

If we were to go out into the streets and invite people in for a party, like the servants did in Jesus’ story, what sort of people would we find?

Is there any way that this church could connect with socially excluded people – the kind of people who can’t invite you back and who don’t improve your social status?

Thank you

This exercise is all about saying thank you for what is good in our city/town/village, and can be combined with the prayer activity that follows it.

Give each person a balloon, a piece of paper and a pen.

Encourage them to write something that they are really thankful to God for about the place where they live. Put the note inside the balloon and then blow up the balloon. If you can, go outside to a high place overlooking your city/town/village and let go of the balloons together, thanking God as you let them go. If this is impractical encourage the young people to do it when they get home – or on their way home.

Prayer

Stand outside the church and look at the map. Where could you find the socially excluded and the needy in your local area? Do you have sheltered housing or residential homes or

facilities for respite care for the needy? Is there a doctor's surgery, clinic or hospital? Is there a centre for refugees or asylum seekers? Does your city have a prison?

Use these prayers (if appropriate for your situation) to remember their needs before God.

God of love,  
turn our hearts to your ways;  
and give us peace.

**Amen.**

*A prayer for refugees*

Almighty and merciful God,  
whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own:  
look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger,  
homeless and hungry.

Bless those who work to bring them relief;  
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts,  
and guide the nations of the world towards that day  
when all will rejoice in your kingdom of justice and of peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*A prayer for justice*

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of our land as your love would make it:  
a land where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;  
a land where the benefits of civilized life are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;  
a land where different races and cultures live in tolerance and mutual respect;  
a land where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.

And give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Prayers for other groups of needy people are available on the Church of England web site: [www.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.cofe.anglican.org)

## **Reaction**

Remind the young people of the ‘living in a box’ game and the facts you told them about housing conditions for some people in this country. Explain about the *Big Issue* magazine and the aims of the Big Issue Foundation, which offers support to homeless and socially excluded people. Its goal is to help people to gain control of their lives, move off the streets and into a home and a job. The website [www.bigissue.com](http://www.bigissue.com) has background information which you can read. Action 19 encourages the young people to buy a copy of the *Big Issue* this week or to make a donation to a homeless charity. You can suggest they do this.

## **Rewind**

Ask if anyone would like to share anything they did last week for people they know whom others consider to be ‘uncool’.

## **Mission Impossible**

Prepare the young person who took up week 2’s ‘Mission Impossible’ to feedback to the rest of the group. An interview is often effective in helping people talk when they feel shy in front of the group or modest about their actions. You might like to ask:

What was your challenge?

What did you do?

Did you get any reaction from anyone?

What was the best bit of the challenge?

Would you do it again?

Prepare a card with one of the actions from week 3 of the booklet printed out in full on it. Put this into a large envelope marked Mission Impossible and seal it. Gather the group together and remind them of the rules: the person must complete the challenge on the card within the week and be prepared to report back on the successful mission at the next Youth Meeting. Make a great drama of presenting the envelope and choosing one of the young people. Read the challenge aloud and wish them luck!

**Trax**

Ask someone known for their love of music to supply a soundtrack, for next week's session, of songs with a link to the theme of 'Work/College/School'.

## Session 4: **Love Life Live Lent theme: Work/College/School**

### Advance preparation

- Blindfold obstacle race – set up two obstacle courses, using furniture, before the session starts, have blindfolds for the competitors, a stopwatch for timing and background music to distract them and increase the difficulty of the race
- Prayer activity – reflective music, a small piece of modeling clay for each young person
- Reaction – A4 card, colouring/writing materials
- Mission Impossible – a card with one of the actions from week 4 of the booklet written out on it, an envelope

### **Play**

#### Blindfold obstacle race

Set out two obstacle courses side by side before your group arrives, using chairs, tables, cushions etc.

Get the young people into pairs and mark one in each pair 'A' and the other 'B'. Stand one pair at the beginning of each course. Explain that person A will guide person B through the course using only their voice and remaining on the starting line at all times. Produce the blindfolds and blindfold person B in each team. Blow a whistle and B must start to move with A instructing him or her which way to go. The winner will be the first 'B' who gets to the end of the course and returns to the starting line. Increase the competitive element of the race by timing the races and make the whole thing very difficult by distracting them with music or background noise. (If you have a small group or a small room just do one pair at a time.)

Once the race is over ask for the pair that made the fastest time to return to the start for a final challenge. Blindfold person B as usual and then, with great drama, also blindfold person A. This is an illustration of 'the blind leading the blind' that the group will discuss in the Pause section of this week's session.

## **Pause**

Bible study and discussion

Life is full of contradictions. If you ask any 10-year-old at school what they want to be when they grow up you will hear the same answers: ‘pop star/ professional footballer’. Everyone wants to be famous, and yet celebrity magazines and newspapers are full of the unhappy lives of people in the public eye. Somehow we don’t seem to make the connection that money and popularity don’t guarantee happiness.

Have you noticed, too, how someone can be everyone’s favourite one minute, then dramatically fall from grace the next and no one has a good word to say about him or her? The same newspapers and magazines that sucked up to someone now spend their time ripping the person apart very publicly.

Let’s see what Jesus has to say about living in a world like this:

*Read Luke 6.37-42 in a couple of different translations to help clarify what Jesus means. Two suggestions are made here but you may have your own favourite versions to use.*

### **New Living Translation, copyright 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust**

“Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

Then Jesus gave the following illustration: “Can one blind person lead another? Won’t they both fall into a ditch? Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher. And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying, ‘Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’

when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."

**The Message, copyright 1993 Eugene H Peterson**

"Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults— unless, of course, you want the same treatment. Don't condemn those who are down; that hardness can boomerang. Be easy on people; you'll find life a lot easier. Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity."

He quoted a proverb: "'Can a blind man guide a blind man?' Wouldn't they both end up in the ditch? An apprentice doesn't lecture the master. The point is to be careful who you follow as your teacher. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbour's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this I-know-better-than-you mentality again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your own part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbour."

*Open a discussion about the prevailing attitudes at school or work:*

How do people treat each other where you work or in your school?

Do you recognize any of the attitudes that Jesus talks about going on around you today?

Mahatma Gandhi famously said, 'We must be the change we want to see in the world.'

How could you make a difference to the workplace/classroom culture you are immersed in every day?

Prayer challenge – prayers are not just what we say to God. There is another side to praying that involves making God real in the world by living out his values in our ordinary everyday lives.

Give the young people a lump of modelling clay each. Ask them to warm it and shape it until they can make an imprint of their finger on it. Draw the young people's attention to the individuality of each pattern. Just as no two fingerprints are the same, so no two people are identical. Each of us has unique gifts and talents, which God has put in us, to use in the world.

Ask the young people to think about the future and the way each one imagines their life working out. Maybe they have a specific career in mind or a country that they long to work in. Get them to shape the modelling clay into something symbolic of their future hopes.

In God's hands our lives can make a mark on our world for good. If the young people want to, they could make a new fingerprint on the symbol of their hopes and quietly offer themselves to God to be the change they want to see in the world. A time of reflection while some music plays would be very appropriate at this point.

### **Reaction**

Many people think of Lent rather negatively as a time of giving things up and not doing things you like. However, Lent can be an extremely positive experience when you begin to do new things that transform your life. Our challenge in the Pause section was to 'be the change you want to see' and to 'make your mark' on the world. This activity will help you do just that.

All around us people moan, complain and criticize. This activity practises positive speech and praise instead.

Give each person an A4 card folded in half. Ask them to open it, write their own name in the middle of the card and pass the card to their left. When they have someone else's card, encourage them to write something about that person that they really like or admire. It could be something that person has done for them and they want to say thank you, or a Bible verse that they feel might encourage them. It should be something uplifting. Once they have done that, pass the card on round to the left again until all the cards have been written on and they get their own card back.

Ask them to spend a moment reading all the comments on their card.

Make the point that it can sometimes be hard to find positive things to say to another person because we are so used to criticizing and judging others. It can also be just as hard to read all the lovely things written about them because we are used to hearing negative statements. Finish by reminding the young people that the words are true, and if this is what the group thinks about them then how much more does God love them!

Tell them to keep the card somewhere safe and, when they feel alone or sad, to read it again and be encouraged

Spend a moment looking through the actions in the *Love Life Live Lent* booklet and pointing out the underlying attitudes each one involves. As an example, action 27, 'Have lunch with someone you don't know well', is really about including people who get left out on the edge of your social network. It is another opportunity to 'be the change you want to see'. Ask everyone to try as many of the actions as they can in the coming week.

### **Rewind**

Ask if anyone would like to share anything they did last week for people who are homeless, such as buying a *Big Issue* magazine or making a donation to a homeless charity (action 19).

### **Mission Impossible**

Prepare the young person who took up week 3's 'Mission Impossible' to feedback to the rest of the group. An interview is often effective in helping people talk when they feel shy in front of the group or modest about their actions. You might like to ask:

What was your challenge?

What did you do?

Did you get any reaction from anyone?

What was the best bit of the challenge?

Would you do it again?

Prepare a card with one of the actions from week 4 of the booklet printed out in full on it. Put this into a large envelope marked Mission Impossible and seal it. Gather the group together and remind them of the rules: the person must complete the challenge on the card within the week and be prepared to report back on the successful mission at the next Youth Meeting. Make a great drama of presenting the envelope and choosing one of the young people. Read the challenge aloud and wish them luck!

### **Trax**

Ask someone known for their love of music to supply a soundtrack, for next week's session, of songs with a link to the theme of 'global'.

## Session 5: **Love Life Live Lent theme: Global**

### Advance preparation

- Play – cards with 80%, 1.5%, 50%, 9%, true, false on them and a prize for the winning team
- Pause – craft materials for collage work, such as a large sheet of paper, pens, tissue paper, magazines, glitter, sequins, lolly sticks, pipe cleaners, glue etc. and small pieces of paper to write a prayer on
- To end – a tall pillar candle, space for reflection and prayer

### **Play**

Divide your group into teams for a quiz. Give each team four cards with percentages on them, a 'true' card and a 'false' card. The teams score points by holding up the card that matches what they believe to be the correct answer.

1. What percentage of the world's income does the richest 20 per cent of the world's population earn?

Answer: 80 per cent

2. What percentage of the world's income does the poorest 20 per cent of the world's population earn?

Answer: 1.5 per cent

3. More than 2.25 million tonnes of rubbish are thrown away by British people every Christmas. What per cent is recycled?

Answer: 50 per cent

4. On average what percentage of household waste is recycled?

Answer: 9 per cent

5. The British spend £1.25 billion on clothes every year. True or false?

Answer: False, we spend double that – £2.5 billion. What we spend on clothes in a year could pay off the entire international debt for eight of Africa's most heavily indebted countries.

6. People in the UK dump 50 tonnes of clothes each week. True or false?

Answer: False, we dump loads more. One company alone processes 120 tonnes of mostly re-useable clothing every week.

7. The average person in the UK consumes 20 times more than the average person in the Third World. True or false?

Answer: True.

7. Europe spends £7.5 billion a year on ice cream. True or false?

Answer: True, that is £1.4 billion more than the cost of providing clean water and sanitation for the entire world.

Give a prize to the winning team.

(This quiz is taken from Youth Topics 'Consumerism' produced by CAFOD, Christian Aid and SCIAF and is reproduced by permission.)

## **Pause**

Bible study and discussion

*Read the story of Moses from Exodus 3.1-12.*

God knew about the trouble the Israelites were in and sent Moses to bring them out of slavery in Egypt. God is doing exactly the same thing today. He sees a bad situation and sends someone along to do something about it. When you watch a news item on the television exposing a clothing company that has been using child labour in its factories, you need to look for the man or woman behind the piece – someone in the right place at the right time to bring about a change for good in our world. The large organizations we are familiar with, such as the International Red Cross, that respond to world crises such as famine, earthquake and flood disasters, are made up of people like you and me, members of a team fighting to bring relief.

*Open a discussion about injustice and oppression around the world today:*

Can you think of an oppressive situation in our world today?

Is there something positive you can do – right here and now – about that bad situation?

Gather lots of craft items for making a large collage poster of planet Earth. Ask the group to work together to create a pictorial representation of the Earth. It would be good to play the 'global' soundtrack (See **Trax** week 5) while everyone works.

Hand out small pieces of paper and writing equipment. Ask the young people to write a prayer about the oppressive situations and global issues that concern them, asking God to send help to those in trouble. Display the prayers on the finished collage.

### **Reaction**

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the complexity of oppressive situations around the world. Don't fall into the trap of doing nothing because you think that the small thing you *can* do will make no real difference. Remember the story of the starfish on the beach:

One day a man was walking along the beach. He noticed that, during the night, many seashells and starfish had been washed up on the sand. They were drying out and would soon be dead.

Out of the corner of his eye he noticed a small figure ahead of him. As he drew closer it appeared that someone was dancing around between the shoreline and the waves. The nearer he got the more detail he noticed. A little girl was carefully picking up one of the stranded starfish and gently throwing it back into the sea so that it would live.

'How sweet,' he thought, 'but there's thousands of creatures lying, dying on this beach. Why bother?' When he came close enough to talk to her he questioned her:

'What are you doing? There's far too many starfish. You can't possibly make a difference!'

'You're probably right,' the little girl said. Then she looked back down at the sand and the bodies all around her. She gently picked up the one closest to her and

tossed that one back into the safety of the ocean. Looking him right in the eye she said, with a huge smile, **‘But I made a difference for that one!’**

Remind the young people that, although they may feel helpless when they look at the scale of a problem, joining together in a group can significantly increase their individual power.

Many of them will want to make a difference to the world they live in. Writing a letter, signing a petition or clicking a computer mouse only takes a few minutes but can make your voice heard in the right places to effect a change. Challenge them to respond to the Pause section by going on to the Internet and researching practical actions to support organizations campaigning for change. Useful websites might include Oxfam, Tearfund, Traidcraft, Christian Aid, or your church may already be supporting its own global project.

### **Rewind**

What did the young people do about the news stories they picked out last week? Did anyone write to the local council or a member of Parliament or get in touch with a local or national organization? Did anyone pray?

### **Mission Impossible**

Prepare the young person who took up week 5’s ‘Mission Impossible’ to feedback to the rest of the group. An interview is often effective in helping people talk when they feel shy in front of the group or modest about their actions. You might like to ask:

What was your challenge?

What did you do?

Did you get any reaction from anyone?

What was the best bit of the challenge?

Would you do it again?

### **Trax**

This is the last session of the five Bible studies, so there will be no need to prepare any music for next week.

**And finally ...** since this is the last session of the five Bible studies for Lent you may like to conclude the evening with a very simple act of worship such as this:

Light a tall pillar candle and ask your group to sit round it. Ask them to think back over the things they have looked at in the five sessions. What has made the most impact on their thoughts and behaviour? What has challenged them? What do they want to have a go at changing about themselves?

Give them space to pray and be silent. If anyone wants to share their thoughts, encourage them to do so. You might like to finish with this prayer attributed to Sir Francis Drake.

Disturb us, Lord, when  
we are too well pleased with ourselves,  
when our dreams have come true  
because we have dreamed too little,  
when we arrived safely  
because we sailed too close to the shore.  
Disturb us, Lord, when,  
with the abundance of things we possess,  
we have lost our thirst  
for the waters of life;  
having fallen in love with life,  
we have ceased to dream of eternity  
and in our efforts to build a new earth,  
we have allowed our vision  
Of the new heaven to dim.  
Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,  
to venture on wider seas

where storms will show your mastery;  
where, losing sight of land,  
we shall find the stars.

We ask you to push back  
the horizons of our hopes;  
and to push into the future  
in strength, courage, hope, and love.